

Dr. Otto Kernberg with Dr. George Makari, January 10, 2018 12:30pm

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GM: Is he writing a full-scale biography?

OK: He interviewed me for four to six hours about my professional background, just a few months ago.

So he has that in German.

GM: That's great. That's part of an archive. So we will put that in an archive file so that people have access to it. They can translate it. I'll look at it, I can read some of it.

OK: I have written one or two papers about my professional development.

GM: Yes.

OK: But, I have never written anything autobiographical, and I have been resisting the invitation of some people to do some celebratory thing. At Columbia they wanted to do something in my honor, but I refused. I really, I hate the guru-ism of psychoanalysis, do you follow me?

GM: Yes

OK: The idealization of certain personalities. It is not good for the field, it is not good for the personality. Nothing comes out of it. It's --

GM: You're one of the very few gurus who refuses to be a guru, then. [laughter]

OK: It's embarrassing.

GM: It should be.

OK: Look, I'm always afraid of becoming the prisoner of my own ideas. Once you -- you get marked as being of a certain position, and the people interested ... Eventually one's own thinking becomes a strait jacket that prevents one from working through what other people are thinking...

GM: So that's a beautiful entry into trying to understand why you haven't been so susceptible to that. Because I think if one tracks your career, one finds in moments that are critical, where you could have become doctrinaire and never did. So I'm interested in that in terms of your professional development. But can we start at the beginning? Do you mind if I ask you: So, your family left Vienna in 1939, which is *late*.

OK: Yes

GM: Tell me about your parents and your family. What were they like?

OK: My father was born in Stanislau, now called -- I don't know how the city is called now -- Stanislavo, or something. I think it belongs to Poland. It was the Austrian province of Galicia. My mother was born in a small village in Hungary... I have very few memories from early childhood because my parents emigrated from where they were born to Vienna and lost touch with the family in Galicia and Hungary. One brother of my father also lived in Vienna, and he had a son my age who was one of my best friends. And a biography about this cousin of mine is being written right now by an Austrian historian. His name was Oswald -- "Ossie." He changed his name to Kern when he was in the United States. Because he was one of the few children who were saved by the children's transport that got Jewish children out of Germany and protected them from the concentration camps.

GM: Yeah.

OK: My cousin. I'm an only child. And he got to know a family, the child of whom grew up and became a historian and became interested. And she published a thesis on the history of the children's transport,

and then became fascinated with this history, the first chapter of which is his childhood, in which there is a reference to his friendship with me and the relationship between our two families.

GM: I see.

OK: So by coincidence I have received it a week ago. Anyhow.

GM: That's interesting. So your parents both came to Vienna separately in adolescence?

OK: Yes, separately.

GM: And your mother was Hungarian?

OK: Yes.

GM: So she spoke Hungarian at home and German?

OK: No. They only spoke German with me. I didn't learn – they both communicated in German.

GM: And were they particularly religious, or secular? They were Jewish, correct?

OK: My father – Both of them were not communicative at all. I was an only child. My mother took care of me. She was hovering over me all the time. My father was interested but distant. Neither of them talked much about themselves. I have no idea of their background, of their history. I've been thinking very often of where did they come from? Where did they--? So all of my impressions are what I saw of them through childhood without being able to go to the roots of that. My father worked in the import/export section of the ministry of the interior in Vienna. I never knew exactly what he did, except I knew that when he was thrown out after the occupation. And that there were friends of his who tipped him off that they were coming for him on Crystal Night and he went into hiding. He and his brother went into hiding for two weeks and managed not to be picked up. His brother – my father had an optimistic personality. He was always cheerful. His attitude was that if Nazis occupied Austria, this was going to

pass by. My father was, first of all, he was *profoundly* nationalistic of Austrian patriarchy. He was a monarchist. I was called Otto in honor of the crown Prince, Otto von Habsburg.

GM: Oh, von Habsburg!

OK: That's why they called me Otto. My father was a monarchist and he loved Austria. He loved Vienna, and he loved to pick me up on the weekends, get with me through Vienna and explain to me about all the buildings, all the monuments and the parks. So I had a very intense relation to the city due to him. It was a major, major interest and commitment. He fought. He was a volunteer in the first world war. He was highly decorated toward the end of the war. He was taken prisoner by the Italian front and was one year in an Italian prison (since then hated Italian food!). [laughter] And he studied chemistry, I believe, but eventually ended up in a civil service function. After emigration he became a travelling salesman for import/export stuffs – clothes and china. And eventually dedicated himself to import/export. It had nothing to do with what he had done before. My mother never worked. I reached the conclusion that there was something vaguely parasitic about her. She was very interested in psychology.

GM: Huh.

OK: She went to all the conferences. Helene Deutsch – the name of Helene Deutsch was mentioned. A cousin of my mother was Manfred Sakel, the discoverer of the insulin coma therapy for schizophrenia.

GM: Oh!

OK: He was her major counsel for bringing me up. Every time she had a problem with me, she would counsel with Manfred. He was the director of a sanatorium, a psychiatric hospital in Vienna, and I would be dragged there and he would make his judgement.

GM: I see. As long as he didn't put you in an insulin shock. [laughter]

OK: There are several stories about that.

GM: What kind of trouble would you make? You seem like a very kind person!

OK: I had an eating disturbance at age four or five. I have vague memories. My father had to dance on the table for me to eat anything. And Manfred Sakel, he was very critical of the Freudians, but he was totally convinced that Alfred Adler had the truth, and he told – when I had the eating disorder, he told my mother to check me into a clinic directed by Mrs. Ellie Rotwein. Ellie Rotwein had a clinic on the Infrastraasen and I was hospitalized there at age five. I remember the first two weeks there, in which I was trying to throw away food and hide it, and I was caught again and again. It was a nightmare. There was a china dog in the corner and I thought it was a real dog and put food there. When I was caught it was stupid. So it was a nightmare. And then I have no memory of any doctor there. And my next memory is of weeks later, in which I ate voraciously. They cured me.

GM: They cured you.

OK: I don't know how. In my analysis I never got the amnesia of the weeks between that despair – their trying to catch me – and then my -- and I was mildly obese by age 10. But out of the -- one day at the clinic I played with a metal whistle. All of a sudden I swallowed it. It was made of tin. I swallowed it. Got desperate. Went to the telephone. I knew how to call my mother, and I said, "I've swallowed a whistle." I went to the nurse first. The nurse said, "Don't tell me those stories. You start telling me stories, you won't go out on Sunday when we go on an excursion." And then I got really panicky, and I called my mother and said, "I swallowed a whistle. No one believes me." Mother called my uncle, Manfred Sakel. He said, "Always believe children." My mother got an ambulance, and an ambulance came to pick me up. I remember that triumphant crowd with the ambulance to the hospital. They x-rayed me, and sure enough they found the thing and it came out the other side. And my mother kept it the rest of her life. I looked for it.

GM: She kept it the rest of her life?

OK: Yes. I looked for it, but after she died I never found it, so it got lost. I don't know where. Anyhow. When I studied medicine many years I was stupid enough not to --- he had become very famous in the United States.

GM: Manfred Sakel?

OK: Yes. He had emigrated many years before the Nazis came. And I was interested in psychiatry, but I was stupid enough not to want to go to the famous uncle. I wanted to make my name by myself. By the time I finally decided that it was stupid and I wrote to him I read in the paper that he had died. But I came to the United States. I went to an associate of his. But who had nothing to do with him or the family. It was a real travesty. I had no further relation to that foundation.

GM: So he was literally your uncle. He wasn't [just] called "uncle," he was literally your uncle?

OK: Yes.

GM: So he was a big figure in your family.

OK: Yes, yes. My mother was also an exquisite a pastry cook. She had taken courses at the most famous imperial pastry school, and to this day I understand something about pastry. Not how to do them, but how to test them. In my childhood at home we had two desserts every day and three on Sunday. And if I misbehaved I didn't get any dessert, and I felt I was severely traumatized by it.

GM: She would make these magnificent Viennese pastries herself at home?

OK: Yes, yes. Viennese pastry has a big variety. It's probably the best in the world, let's say at an equal level with the French, except that the Austrian pastry has more variation because of the cooked types of it. There are some.. well, any how. [laughs]

GM: What kind of school did you go to when you were in Vienna?

OK: I went to the public school like everybody else, Volksschule, the first four years. Then I was accepted to go to a Jewish Gymnasium, but Hitler came in. The Gymnasium disappeared. I was- I went to it the first year high school and to a Jewish folk school, in which I was for several months, and then I stopped going to that, I don't know why. It was already a chaotic period of time. I must confess to you that since Hitler came into Vienna the night of March 12th to 13th, 1938, we left July 16, 1939. So it was a long time. My parents didn't – at first I didn't know what was going on. I was in the huge crowd receiving Hitler when he came to Vienna. So I was standing there --- yelling "Sieg heil!" I was 10 years old. Almost. Nine and a half.

GM: Did your parents manifest fear?

OK: They were -- gradually, yes. They tried not to talk with me about it but I could sense the fear. And they gradually lost, it was – at first, I was still – I was in the fourth grade. Out of 30 students we were 11 Jews in the class. The teacher called all of us Jewish students at one point and said, "All of you are going to go to a different school." So we were thrown out of the school in the middle of the year. That was painful, because he had been my teacher from the first of the year on.

GM: Oh, you had had the same teacher for four years and he announces that because you are Jewish you are going to be leaving?

OK: Yes. That was the system in the Viennese public schools. You picked up a teacher in the first grade and were first, second, third fourth, and then it shifted. Interesting system. So we were thrown out. I got into the Jewish school, but there was -- I don't remember ever having learned anything or studied anything. I became friends with three other Jewish kids. We were street boys at the time, and we started stealing, stealing from pastry shops. For several months, I was-- We had a system by which two of us would stand at the corners to see if there was any policeman, and two would go into a shop. One would ask for a type of chocolate, the other would pick up things. The two would run out and we would

go to the corner that seemed free. As I think of it retrospectively it was, if we had been caught it would have been *terrible* for our families, but so it was.

GM: So you were out of school, and there was no structure for you at all at that point?

OK: There was no structure. So there were bad moments. Once. The most disagreeable of the ones I [remember], I was going with my mother to Mariahilfer Strasse and corner of Neubaugasse. By chance, that was also where the clinic had been.

GM: Say the streets again?

OK: It was Mariahilfer Strasse, that's a big street, and corner of Neubaugasse. Anyhow. I was standing there and this armed man, a storm trooper, asked my mother to wash the pavement.

GM: Oh my God.

OK: So my mother started washing the pavement and I was standing next to her, and a little crowd gathered around us making *fun* of my mother. That's a bad memory. That this crowd on the street, no selected public, just the usual persons. Turned into a hateful tirade. My parents --

GM: Was she forced to wear some signifier?

OK: No, no.

GM: Not in Vienna.

OK: No. No.

GM: So how did this SS trooper know that she was Jewish?

OK: She looked Jewish? She must have looked Jewish. I don't know. But they sure picked the right person. That was a bad experience. After I came out from that age five, after I came out of the clinic of Ellie Rotwein, I was sent to a Kinderheim, to a children's place. It was like a halftime day hospital. It

wasn't really. It was a kindergarten, where I would go every day after school and play. There were lectures, and every week -- It was directed by Mrs. Helene Bader, and every week a psychiatrist would come in, Dr. Krampflichek. And I would have an interview with her. And this went on for years.

GM: So it was kind of therapeutic kindergarten?

OK: Yes.

GM: And this Mrs. Bader, what was -- what do you know of her?

OK: She was also -- She became my English teacher. My parents sent me to private English lessons after Hitler invaded because they wanted to send me on a children's transport. I didn't know that. They told me that many years later. That they changed their mind and they didn't want me to separate from them. So I stayed with them. My cousin, Ossie, had been vacationing in France. His father told him to stay there. That's how he got on the Kinder transport. Anyhow. So, both of these women were Adlerian psychologists, I found out. Dr. Krampflichek was an Adlerian psychologist. Ellie Rotwein was a well known Adlerian. I would go for English lessons with Mrs. Bader, and after Crystal Night they had destroyed the apartment of my English teacher. She had one room where she taught me. The rest of the thing was kind of all in ruins. So there are the things that are kind of images of Vienna. It was a total change from what I considered a very happy [time]...

GM: And your poor father was a nationalist, a monarchist.

OK: My mother was not interested in politics at all. My father thought everything was going to be fine. It was only after Kristalnacht that they grew frightened, and they tried to get away. And they had difficulty. All the countries were filled. The only place they could get were visas to go to Chile. They decided to go to Italy because they were afraid they wouldn't get out, and they were right. Because we went out July 17th The war started on September 1st, and after that nobody got out.

GM: Yeah.

OK: Vienna had about 120,000 Jews out of only about 1.8 million or 2 million inhabitants. 60,000 got out, 5,000 went into hiding, 55,000 were killed.

GM: Murdered.

OK: So, my father finally got frightened. My mother was anxious all along. She said, "They're going to kill us all." She was, she had a paranoid attitude.

GM: That unfortunately turned out to be correct.

OK: Yeah. In a way, if not, if she had not put pressure on my father we would have stayed.

GM: You would have stayed.

OK: His brother, Hermann, who had a factory of, um, a clothing factory, would make travel to switch around during the Nazi occupation, would come and go. And finally, he couldn't leave. And he and his wife and the brother of my friend Ossie -- his older brother -- they were caught and sent to Lodz and then to one of the extermination camps.

GM: How terrible.

OK: Yes. So I understood from my parents that all of the rest of the family had disappeared or had been killed.

GM: I see. The family from Hungary, the family from Galicia, they had all been killed.

OK: They had all been killed, yes. Twice I found people with my last name. One in California and one in a recent trip to Israel. A psychologist introduced himself with their last name. But they seem to be a branch far away, so I -- my cousin became again -- for twenty years I didn't know that he was alive. By chance, we found out. We became friends again, but he has died a few months ago.

GM: He just passed? I'm so sorry to hear that. But it's wonderful that you had reconnected. Did your family – Freud described this – suddenly you have a complex identity.

OK: I knew vaguely that my father was somehow involved in some counsel or through some counsel to Freud about how to transfer belongings to England. Because my father knew something about export. But this is only vague comments of my mother. I don't think she would have been very sympathetic or interested. Let me remind you what Manfred Sakel thought of – Alfred Adler was the only [one].

GM: Right. But I'm interested. He was someone who was a war hero in World War I, very nationalistic, and then overnight his identity becomes transformed. He becomes "a Jew." Is that what happened?

OK: Yes. Yes, yes.

GM: And he was a secular person, or religious? Did you have a religious upbringing?

OK: He was – I understand that he was totally atheistic until his father died, and then he became what now would be called modern orthodox. This is not a category that existed. So he was as orthodox as Viennese Jews were. They wouldn't wear their orthodox garb, but they would eat Kosher. We had a Kosher household. He would pray every morning with Tefillin the things, to the end of his life. I ran into trouble with my father because in adolescence I was atheistic. He forced me to go to synagogue and I brought the booklets of Stalin and Lenin. During services I read Stalin and Lenin. So I had a very rebellious kind of militant atheistic view. In recent years I've become very respectful of religion, although I'm aware of all the positive and negative aspects of religious identity. I certainly disagree with Freud, who thought that eventually religion would go away and that we would be totally reasonable. That was going against Freud's own experience.

GM: Yes, isn't that interesting?

OK: So that, and that –

GM: It's a strange form of optimism he had.

OK: Yeah, yeah. I have at various points in my life had influences from very religious people, not from my parents. I had a professor of the school of psychology of the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile, that later became a close friend and had some influence on me, Father Hernán Larraín. I was also dating a girl in my class in medicine who then became a very famous breast surgeon in Latin America, who was Catholic. I am now married, of course, to Kay, who is Catholic, and is also critical of the Catholic establishment.

GM: Let me take us back a little. So you left through Italy. And did you go from – what port did you leave from in Italy, do you remember?

OK: We went to Italy in July. I had always gone on vacation into Italy. My parents loved Abbazia, now it's called Opatija, does that mean anything to you? It's part of the Istrian peninsula where Trieste used to be Austria before the first World War and then was taken by Italy. On that coast of the Adriatic there are a number of lovely little resorts, and one that was a very favorite one was Abbazia. And I remember the summers at Abbazia was marvelous, and there were my parents – We went to wait in Abbazia for the visas, so we spend time that last summer in Abbazia. Finally, we went to Genova. And for the final time getting the visa and taking the ship from Genova to Valparaíso, Chile.

GM: Chile. And tell me about your coming to Chile and your adaptation and exile.

OK: We came to Chile without – as part of immigrants. My father, my father was so late in putting all our belongings into crates and to be sent, that in the process the war broke out and we lost absolutely everything we had.

GM: Wow.

OK: So we had arrived in Chile when we found out that all our belongings were gone. I arrived in Chile on January 21, 1940.

GM: 1940? So you spent some time in Italy waiting for the papers and you knew the war had already broken out.

OK: Yes. We were very worried. But Italy was very calm. It was not yet at war, and there was no antisemitism on the streets in Italy. In Italy, antisemitism was much more important in the fascist government under German pressure. Mussolini was not principally anti-Semitic as far as I can tell.

GM: Interesting.

OK: So it was a relaxed time, although we worried. We had little money and time was going by. But then when we got to Chile we really had *nothing*.

GM: Yeah, you had no money, no possessions. Did you have family there or anyone you knew?

OK: No. We arrived there and were taken – there was a Jewish organization that took us from the boat to a place in a Jewish kind of restaurant where we were being fed. The joint organization was providing funds for the support of refugees. We were distributed to live in various quarters. My parents and I were assigned to a home in which we had a room, and for several months we lived in a room of a home that belonged to very nice people.

GM: Who were doing this out of the goodness of their heart, is that right? They were simply being kind.

OK: Yes. The first week we were in a room in a hotel next to the one of the public squares. I went down to play there. That was January, middle of the summer. From the first day there, there were children playing and they invited me to join them. I didn't speak a word of Spanish. They were playing Indians and soldiers, and they were very amused and taught me three words. And so I picked it up from the street. Then my father got a job at the Jewish textile firm. His previous knowledge of clothing was

helpful, so we could rent an apartment in Valparaíso. It was a decent apartment, and my mother never worked. So I felt safe. It was a modest. I still go there to visit when I got to Chile. It was very modest. But I had a room for myself. It was in Valparaíso.

GM: Where is that?

OK: Valparaíso is the main port of Chile, close to Santiago, the capital.

GM: Oh, OK.

OK: And in Valparaíso there is a very nice hill which is mostly inhabited by old German immigrants, old Jewish [people]. So it was a very nice part of town. And as I got to know that quarter I got to love that place. I would say that I transferred my love of Vienna as a city -- Cities and geography have always been very important in my life -- I transferred it to love of that city, Valparaíso. I would roam about. There were about 100 German speaking Jewish families who came in several transports. They formed the community. So I was part of the German-speaking community. And one of the people that -- when I was 13, I got Bar Mitzva'd. And I made friends with the group. There were about 10 to 12 children my age, between ages 10 and 12. And we became a group. And I learned that one person there had been a Jewish group leader in Germany. His name was Hans Aufrichtig. Aufrichtig means honest. I approached him and asked him -- he was a man in his 40s -- very *old*! [laughter] -- I was 13. I asked him whether he was willing to become a leader of our group, and he accepted. So he created a Jewish youth group styled on German youth movements, and I was in that from ages 13 to 16 while I lived in Valparaíso and that man acquired a fundamental influence on my life. He had been analyzed by a Jungian analyst. I learned about analysis from him. I started reading about Freud. Age 15, I was reading all Freud. I met an Adlerian psychologist there, Mrs. Wittenberg, who also became very important to me... picked up the psychologists in that community and that gave me the intellectual life that otherwise I guess, and kept me in German culture -- I continued reading. There was a lending library where they lent you books, a

German lending library. I would go every week, take out six books, read them during the week, and then. So, this is how I developed a German culture in a Spanish environment while learning Spanish. I went to school and developed Chilean friends. I had a dual life of the German Jewish community and Chilean friends. Had a first Chilean girlfriend. She was Eliana... I was 13 years old, she was 14. It was a wonderful sexual experience. It was my initiation to sexual life. I recommend it to everybody. I have never -- When I came to the United States, to the Menninger Foundation many years later and people said to me, people are too young for sexual intimacy, they are immature, I always thought it was just cultural bullshit. And I'm still convinced of the same thing. I think that psychoanalysis in the United States in the 1960s adopted the puritanism of American culture. And it gave me a sense how much psychoanalytic theory was being influenced by culture, and that Freud's attitude about homosexuality was much more natural and tolerant than that of generations after that.

GM: Yes.

OK: So I, well, I've written a little about this in my book about psychoanalysis, *Psychoanalysis at the Crossroads*, I talk about it, you know. It was published with all my papers about critique of psychoanalytic institutions. It was published about a year ago.

GM: Yeah, yeah. That's the one with *Forty ways* or *Thirty Ways to Destroy the Creativity* is the very end of that book.

OK: That's one chapter of the book, yes.

GM: That's the book.

OK: I collected -- I had written after that some other things, but that is the main body. That is something I am very involved with to this day, trying to do something with what I consider the reactionary, self-

destructive aspect of psychoanalytic institutions. I like to say that the best demonstration of the theory of the death drive are psychoanalytic institutions. [Laughter]

GM: That's funny. So, in Chile, what kind of an educational system do you –

OK: I went to a public school. The first year, I went into a protestant public school, which my mother put me in because she thought it was better than the general public schools. But she became disappointed. It was just a – it was not -- the public schools, the elementary public schools in Chile were horribly bad. Horribly bad! My mother wanted to protect me from that, and put me in the protestant school, which was probably better. And then I went into high school, then called *Liceo*. And that high school system in Chile was pretty good. The government – the leftist governments had put a lot of money into education. So then I got a decent basic education that was with six years of high school. And then the European system of seven years of medical school, of which the first three years were really pre-medical.

GM: I see. So in a way, like in France, you were accepted immediately to –

OK: Yes. Yes. So what I missed was the general humanistic education of colleges in this country. But that I had independently by my German reading. I've compared what my children have been learning with what I did. I can see that I did – but of course I don't know anything about English literature. To this day I don't know anything except novels that I read that emerge. I must say, for many years most of my reading was Spanish literature and German literature. And now I'm more and more really to German literature, which feels most comfortable.

GM: Interesting. Did you feel that at some point you became in part Chilean? You became --

OK: Definitely. Oh yes.

GM: You didn't feel like an alien or a foreigner?

OK: No. No, no.

GM: Did your parents? It's harder for the parents often.

OK: My parents always remained immigrants. I was, I became, in particular – well, I had a double identity. I was in medical school with close friends, I was dating this girl, Yvonne. We had a group of friends. But at the same time I was, from that group, that youth group. It, eventually, it – older children wanted this man to become their leader, as well. People between fifteen and eighteen. And so, all of a sudden, there was a big movement in this small town of Valparaiso. And a leftist Zionist youth movement in Santiago, the capital, became interested and incorporated that and it became part of the Hashomer Hatzair, which is a Marxist leftist Zionist movement in which I was educated into Marxist leftist Zionist – became an expert in Marxist theory. And while I was in Santiago in medical school I was at the same time in that movement and became expert in Marxist theory.

GM: Interesting. The politics of the country at that time were fairly stable in Chile, right? There were stable governments that were left of center.

OK: It varied. Mostly leftist - centric, left of center. Pretty stable. When I was in the first year of medical school I was, I became a member of the communist circle, and I was sent with – they selected me with three others – to visit the Braden copper mines, the biggest copper mines, which were striking against the American Braden Copper company. I spent a week in the mountains in the mines while we got through with the help of the communist deputy 3,000 workers in strike against the police. It sounded very romantic at first, and then I discovered that the leadership were living like kings while the rest of the people were hungry, and I raised questions. The rest of our delegation raised questions.

GM: The leadership of the striking miners?

OK: Yes. We raised questions with them. It wasn't well received among the delegation of the men. And they got defensive, and finally they accused us of being agents of the government. So we left totally disappointed. That was a political sham. So I became distrustful. And then there were the Slansky trials

in Czechoslovakia, and that ended my relation with the communist system. In theory I still believed in Marxist potential, and it was only in the United States that I had my definite shift in political orientation after reading the three volumes of Kolakowski's *Analysis of Marxism*. And that -- I don't know whether you are familiar with it?

GM: I don't know that, no.

OK: It is a very deep, radical philosophical analysis of Marxism as a system that convinced me definitely, even *before* I knew about Stalinist theories. Already philosophically, it changed me fundamentally. So my position became that of what would be called a European Liberal, or what here would have been called that of a neoconservative person. Except it doesn't fit with neoconservatism in the sense of a liberationist attitude about sexuality and social consciousness and about wealth and distribution. For many years I used to vote Democratic because of that. Then I became interested in the moderate Republican approach because of my opposition to bureaucracy and my concern about overloading the state with function. And estimating that the importance of the responsibility of the individual. So I started voting Republican. I only separated completely from that after the complete collapse of the Republican party's moral instinct in connection with the present government.

GM: The present government, yes.

OK: That is, for me, I don't care about Trump, but the moral collapse of the Republican party. Because I really granted them an honest ideology. The collapse of that is the greatest price we're paying. It's affecting collective morality.

GM. Yeah. Collective morality. I would love to talk more about that. Let me go back, though. So you're in Chile, and you go through medical school. And you've already had this deep connection to psychoanalysis and to psychology.

OK: I had a connection, yes. But I didn't connect it with medicine. It was --

GM: That's right, this is Mr. So-and-so and Mrs. So-and-So. These are Adlerians. They're not physicians.

OK: That's right. I did not connect them with medicine. And I was -- at first I became interested in gastroenterology, wanted to become a gastroenterologist. Then I got interested in neurology, wanted to become a neurologist! I really, I was caught up by what I was studying. And then I got into psychiatry. My teacher was Ignacio Matte Blanco.

GM: Oh yes, of course!

OK: Does the name say something to you?

GM: Yes.

OK: I think he was the greatest psychiatrist in Latin America. Matte -- he had been trained in German descriptive psychiatry. He had been trained in psychoanalysis in Great Britain.

GM: With who?

OK: His analyst was Walter Schmideberg, the husband of Melitta Schmideberg.

GM: Oh! Schmideberg's husband!

OK: Yes, that was his analyst. He was a middle group man. He had -- he was originally a neurologist then became a German-style psychiatrist. When he found out that I was fascinated by his lectures, he had --

GM: On general psychopathology?

OK: General psychopathology. He was -- he combined -- he was the most important influence in my -- what time is it?

GM: I have until 2. I just wanted to make sure that was working, that's why I looked at it.

OK: Yes, yes. He combined solid knowledge of descriptive psychiatry with solid knowledge of psychoanalysis. It was philosophical. He felt outed as pro-German. He said, you speak German? I said, yes. He said, I want you to read Bumke. I said, ok. I went to the library and said can you please give me the Bumke in German? The librarian said, which volume? I said, what do you mean? He said, It's twelve volumes! I dared not to ask which volume. I studied all 12 volumes of Bumke, and that gave me a knowledge in descriptive psychopathology that then permitted me to look at patients and try to identify their symptoms. That permitted me later on to keep my interest in descriptive psychology while I was getting interested in psychoanalysis. And of course he was the originator— he was a leader of the Chilean psychoanalytic society and Institute training psychoanalysis in Chile. Later on I had serious conflicts with him because I was rebellious. I had difficult moments out of my own immaturity. Eventually we became friends.

GM: So initially he recognizes you because of your German?

OK: Yes.

GM: And wants you to – does he not read German? So you're going to help him in some way by –

OK: No, he read German.

GM: Oh, OK, he wants you to go and study what he studied.

OK: Yes, and he became very interested in supporting me. He was the one who said I needed to go to the United States. He wrote out for me the program for a 1 year fellowship in the United States. He had been in the United States as well. So I was *deeply* appreciative of him.

GM: He was your mentor, it sounds like.

OK: He was my mentor. I came to the states, I had the fellowship. I wrote it up. And then I made the terrible, stupid mistake. I came back, I wrote my report and my recommendations, and sent it

simultaneously to him, and to the dean of the medical school, bypassing his authority. And he got enraged at me. And he was right. I apologized. It was self-defeating stupidity.

GM: But it's a mistake of youth, right? I mean, these are the things that young mavericks charging forward make.

OK: Yes. Yes, yes. Yes. But eventually the relationship changed. We became friends. He emigrated to Italy and became a professor in Italy. We continued our relationship and became very close.

GM: What were your big recommendations? What did you think needed to change when you came back? You were here on a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship.

OK: That's right.

GM: And what did you discover that you brought back with you to Chile?

OK: The need to integrate descriptive psychiatry with psychoanalysis. I felt that the teaching in Chile did not reflect the actual knowledge. It was, it was very positive! It was just *stupid* that I should do such a thing. It was one of the painful experiences I had with authority. The other one was he left for the year to teach in Venezuela and left a Professor Rodriguez second in command in charge of the department of Psychiatry. This Dr. Rodriguez knew that several of the people who worked there were professors of various courses of various universities, and tried to absorb them himself! I was teaching. I was professor at the school of social work, professor of Mental Health. And professor of psychological testing in the school of psychology of the Catholic University. He approached me to deal with this –

GM: To take your class?

OK: Yes. And I refused. And he said, People like you, from your race, should be careful in the way in which you deal with authority. This was the first official anti-semitic comment I had ever received from a teacher or someone in authority, actually. It shocked me.

GM: You had not encountered antisemitism in Chile.

OK: No, no. Except By Germans – there were Germans who smashed the windows of American and English oriented shops and we smashed the windows of shops of Germans and Italians. But that shocked me. And I decided that I needed to go – I needed to get away. And I decided I had to go to the American Embassy to look for fellowships. That was the stimulus to go for a year to the United States. And when I came back I had two crises. One was that stupidity. And the other was I went to the office of Dr. Rodriguez and told him – I would -- in Spanish, it is stronger.

GM: Say it in Spanish.

OK: I told him I would beat the shit out of him if he were not an old, decrepit man. I just wanted to tell him that shit like he should be thrown out of the medical school. And so I told him what I thought without touching him physically. And from then on he was frightened to death of me. He was still going around, and I enjoyed myself. That was a triumph. The other was a stupidity. I have had such problems with authority. Anyway. So I came to Chile. When I came to the United States I had my final problem with authority with Karl Menninger.

GM: Oh. Tell me about that. So, you went to Topeka after you – You had the Rockefeller Foundation, you went back to Chile, and it takes you how long to come back to America after – a couple of years?

OK: First of all, in American my first trip was to Johns Hopkins –

GM: It was to Johns Hopkins. With Frank.

OK: Yes. But I was approached by the people from Menninger's saying that they were interested to have me there as a fellow in their psychotherapy program. So I was a year in the States, went back to Chile, taught everything I had to teach in a year, and then went back to the United States to the Menninger Foundation.

GM: I see. OK, so now we're in Topeka.

OK: I was going to the Menninger Foundation. At first only for three years. I said I wanted to be there one year. Wallerstein talked with me while I was first in the States and said it's not worthwhile to come to Topeka for one year. If you want to come, come for three years. I was interested in psychotherapy research. I said OK, I will. So I went back to Chile. That went for three years. But then once I was three years in Topeka I wanted to stay. Karl Menninger, who was the big hotshot, at first was very positive toward me. But then something happened, and that I want to keep confidential.

GM: OK.

OK: So how do we go about that? Are you still taping it?

GM: I'll turn off the tape and you can tell me while I turn off the tape. Let's come back to it. So Wallerstein was the person who really recruited you, to work on *42 Lives*?

OK: Right. He, so – I went to Topeka, worked with Wallerstein on the Psychotherapy research project. After Wallerstein left as chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, University of California at San Francisco, I became director of the psychotherapy research project, wrote the final report, and at the same time developed my thinking about borderline patients, combining – at the same time I became – in Chile I had been trained – at first it was an ego-psychiatry middle group. At the end of my training it became Kleinian of Argentina.

GM: Of the Argentinians?

OK: Yes. Yes. I wanted to have a broader perspective. In the United States I went smack into the Baltimore Psychoanalytic Institute and the cultural psychological oriented Washington one. I wanted to learn cultural psychoanalysis and ego-psychology. And so I went into Topeka to learn ego-psychology at

that. But while I was there I actually started to integrate in my mind Kleinian theory and the British middle group and ego-psychology and my interest in descriptive psychiatry. This is how I developed my work. I had the time in Topeka to do that.

GM: Ok, but can I press you on that a little? Lots of people had time. You're a *systematic* thinker. You're a person who puts things together, is that fair to say?

OK: It's -- I try. Yes. I try to do that. I try to keep alert to anything going on in psychoanalysis, critically. I'm not interested in an ecumenical agreement, but in what makes sense in an integrated theory of technique.

GM: Because you were exposed to many thinkers who had one perspective. Many of them had one dominant perspective.

OK: Yes. Matte Blanco, that middle group –

GM: So the middle group was more – they were more ... synthetic.

OK: Yes. At the end it became purely Kleinian.

GM: For him?

OK: Yes. For them. I went to the states and had culturalist influences. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann was very influential in my thinking. And Harold Searles was another one. Then the ego- psychology in

Topeka, Kansas, that was pure ego-psychology. Then I became personally related to Edith Jacobson. Her whole orientation – and Margaret Mahler—

GM: You had a personal relationship with --

OK: Yes. Because they were visiting professors. They became very friendly with Paulina, who was interested in child psychoanalysis. So Margaret Mahler, Edith Jacobson, Paulina, and I became close friends over the years.

GM: When did you meet Paulina?

OK: At the medical school in Santiago. First, she was one of the young girls in the Jewish Zionist youth movement. Then I met her again in the medical school. She approached me because she had been told that I knew psychoanalysis, and she wanted me to teach her psychoanalysis. So I decided to meet with – I was in the last year, the seventh year. She was in the first year of medical school. She seemed intelligent. I told her I could give her an overview of psychoanalysis. The only time I had was Sunday mornings, if she was willing to meet with me Sunday mornings. We met every Sunday morning in one of the big Avenues. And I would teach her every Sunday morning for several months. We met every Sunday morning. It was a stimulus to systematize my knowledge of psychoanalysis. And then one thing led to another, I invited her to go out one afternoon, and that's how it started.

GM: I see.

OK: Yes.

GM: And you must have been analyzed in Chile?

OK: I was analyzed. My first analyst was Carlos Whiting.

GM: And how do you spell his last name?

OK: W-H-I-T-I-N-G. Who also became the first analyst, later on, of Paulina.

GM: OK. And what was his – what was your experience of that analysis and his perspective?

OK: His was very much of the orientation of Matte Blanco and he was a very good and --- person, not an intellectual. I was so obsessive, I got myself into all kinds of transference entanglements. And at a certain point I was in a transference crisis and asked to change analyst, after several years of analysis. And I shifted toward Ramon Gauzaraín who was my second analyst. I graduated after several years of analysis. Those were my two analysts.

GM: He was also, you would say, kind of middle school...?

OK: Gauzaraín was really Kleinian. He became -- He was completely Kleinian.

GM: I see.

OK: And he influenced my Kleinian orientation when I graduated, because it was the attitude. But I was also chafing under it.

GM: Do you think that any of that stems from being in exile and have two identities in a way? There's this guy Karl Mannheim who says for an intellectual the best thing is to be in between. To be... something.

OK: Possibly, possibly. Possible, But it is true that I always lived well to the center.

GM: Yes. Alright. I'm going to turn these off and then you can...

END.